ALFRED:

A

MASQUE.

AS IT IS NOW REVIVED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL,

IN

DRURY-LANE,

By His Majesty's Servants.

LONDON:

Printed for T. Cadell, and T. Becket, in the Strand; and J. Wilkie, No. 71, St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1773.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

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ALFRED, a Maſque, was written by Mr. *Thompſon*, in conjunction with Mr. *Mallet*, at the requeſt of his Royal Highneſs *Frederick* Prince of Wales, and was performed at Cliffden-Houſe, before their Royal Highneſſes, on the firſt of Auguſt, 1740. Ten years after it was adapted for the ſtage by Mr. *Mallet*, and was received with great applauſe. Mr. *Mallet*, in his advertiſement (after giving an account of his joining with Mr. *Thompſon* in the performance) goes on—" But to fit it " for the ſtage, I found it would be ne- " ceſſary to new plan the whole, as well as " write the particular ſcenes over again; to " enlarge the deſign, and make *Alfred* what " he ſhould have been at firſt, the principal " figure in his own *Maſque*. This I have " done; but, according to the preſent ar- " rangement of the fable, I was obliged to " reject a great deal of what I had written

" in

" in the other, neither could I retain of my
" friend's part, more than three or four
" ſingle ſpeeches, and a part of one ſong;
" I mention this expreſly, that whatever
" faults are found in the preſent perfor-
" mance, they may be charged, as they
" ought to be, entirely to my account."

D. Mallet.

It is now revived with ſome few alterations, and with ſome New Muſic; the favourite airs of Dr. *Arne*, as they ſtood in the Maſque altered by *Mallet*, are reſerved; there are ſome few alterations, which are now publiſhed.

A R-

ARGUMENT.

After the Danes *had made themſelves maſters of* Chippenham, *the ſtrongeſt city in the kingdom of* Weſſex, Alfred *was at once abandoned by all his ſubjects; in this univerſal defection, that monarch found himſelf obliged to retire into the little iſle of* Athelney *in* Somerſetſhire—*there, in the habit of a peaſant, he liv'd unknown in a ſhepherd's cottage—he is ſuppoſed to be found in this retreat by the Earl of* Devon, *whoſe caſtle upon the river* Tau *was then beſieged by the* Danes.

PROLOGUE.

PROLOGUE,

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr. GARRICK,

When it was firſt Acted.

IN arms renown'd, for arts of peace ador'd,
ALFRED, the nation's father, more than lord,
A Britiſh *author has preſum'd to draw,*
Struck deep, even now, with reverential awe;
And ſets the Godlike figure fair in view—
O may diſcernment find the likeneſs true.
When Daniſh *fury, with wide-waſting hand,*
Had ſpread pale fear, and ravage o'er the land,
This prince ariſing bade confuſion ceaſe,
Bade order ſhine, and bleſt his iſle with peace;
Taught liberal arts to humanize the mind,
And heaven-born ſcience to ſweet freedom join'd.
United thus, the friendly ſiſters ſhone,
And one ſecur'd, while one adorn'd his throne.
Amidſt theſe honors of his happy reign,
Each Grace and every Muſe compos'd his train:
As grateful ſervants, all exulting ſtrove,
At once to ſpread his fame, and ſhare his love.
To night, if aught of fiction you behold,
Think not in Virtue's cauſe, the bard too bold.
If ever angels from the ſkies deſcend,
It muſt be—truth and freedom to defend.
Thus would our author pleaſe—be it your part,
If not his labors, to approve his heart.
True to his country's, and to honor's cauſe,
He fixes, there, his fame, and your applauſe;
Wiſhes no failing from your ſight to hide,
But, by free BRITONS, *will be freely try'd.*

PERSONS.

ENGLISH.

ALFRED,	Mr. REDDISH,
EARL of DEVON,	Mr. JEFFERSON,
EDWIN,	Mr. WRIGHT,
HERMIT,	Mr. J. AICKIN,
CORIN,	Mr. BANNISTER,

English Officers, Soldiers, &c.

DANES.

DANISH KING,	Mr. PALMER,
FIRST DANE,	Mr. BRERETON,
SECOND DANE,	Mr. J. BANNISTER.

Danish Officers, Soldiers, &c.

ELTRUDA,	Miss YOUNGE,
EMMA,	Mrs. SMITH,
EDITH,	Mrs. WRIGHTEN.

The Vocal Parts by
Mr. VERNON, Mr. CHAMPNES, Mrs. SMITH, Mrs. WRIGHTEN, Mrs. SCOTT, Mrs. HUNT, &c.

Shepherds, Soldiers, Attendant Spirits, &c.
&c. &c. &c.

*ALFRED:

A

MASQUE.

A NEW OVERTURE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE *a rural Proſpect, with the Cottage of* CORIN *and* EMMA.

EMMA *Sings.*

I.

IF thoſe who live in ſhepherd's bower,
Preſs not the rich and ſtately bed:
The new-mown hay and breathing flower,
A ſofter couch beneath them ſpread.

II.

If thoſe who ſit at ſhepherd's board,
Sooth not their taſte by wanton art;
They take what nature's gifts afford,
And take it with a chearful heart.

EMMA

---

* There are ſome ſcenes, and ſome paſſages, that were always omitted in the repreſentation, as may be ſeen in page 53, 54, 55, 56, and 58; but are here printed, that the reader may have it as it was originally written.

EMMA, *comming forward.*

CORIN! CORIN! 'tis he. Againſt yon aged oak,
Penſive and loſt in thought, he leans his head.

CORIN.

Soft: let us not diſturb him. Gentle EMMA,
Poor tho he be, unfriended and unknown,
My pity waits with reverence on his fortune.
Modeſt of carriage, and of ſpeech moſt gracious,
As if ſome ſaint or angel in diſguiſe
Had grac'd our lowly cottage with his preſence,
He ſteals, I know not how, into the heart,
And makes it pant to ſerve him. Truſt me, EMMA,
He is no common man.

EMMA.

Some lord, perhaps,
Or valiant chief, that from our deadly foe,
The haughty, cruel, unbelieving *Dane*,
Seeks ſhelter here.

CORIN.

And ſhelter he ſhall find:
Who loves his country, is my friend and brother.
Behold him well. Fair manhood in its prime,
Even thro the homely ruſſet that conceals him,
Shines forths and proves him noble.

EMMA.

'Tis moſt like,
He is not what his preſent fortunes ſpeak him.
But, ah! th' inhuman foe is all around us;
We dare not keep him here.

CORIN.

CORIN.

Thou haſt not weigh'd
This iſland's force; the deep defence of woods,
Nature's own hand hath planted ſtrong around;
The rough encumbrance of perplexing thorns,
Of intertwining brakes that riſe between,
And choak up every inlet from abroad.
Yet more; thou know'ſt, beyond this woody verge
Two rivers broad and rapid hem us in;
Along whoſe border ſpreads the gulphy pool,
And trembling quagmire to betray the foot
Its treacherous greenſword tempts. One path alone
Winds to this plain, ſo difficult and ſo ſtrait,
My ſingle arm, againſt a band of foes,
Could long, perhaps, defend it.

EMMA.

Yet, my CORIN,
Revolve the ſtern decree of that fierce tyrant,
The *Daniſh* king: "Who harbours, or relieves
"An *Engliſh* captain, dies the death of traitors:
"But who their haunts diſcovers, ſhall be ſafe,
"And high rewarded."

CORIN.

Now, juſt heaven forbid,
An *Engliſhman* ſhould ever count for gain
What villainy muſt earn. No: are we poor?
Be honeſty our riches. Are we mean,
And humbly born? The true heart makes us noble.
Theſe hands can toil; can ſow the ground and reap
For thee and thy ſweet babes. Our daily labour
Is daily wealth: it finds us bread and raiment.
Could *Daniſh* gold give more?

I.

Though to a deſart iſle confin'd,
In humble poverty we live,
The honeſt heart, the virtuous mind,
Are riches, ſplendor cannot give.

II.

Theſe hands inur'd to daily toil,
Can ſow the ground, can plough and reap,
And ſhall improve the gen'rous ſoil,
Thee and thy lovely babes to keep.

EMMA.

Alas the while!
That loyal faith is fled from hall and bower,
To dwell with village ſwains,

CORIN.

Ah look! behold,
Where EDITH, all-abandon'd to deſpair,
Hangs weeping o'er the brook.

EDITH *approaches ſlowly to ſoft muſic.*

She ſings.

I.

A youth adorn'd with every art,
To warm and win the coldeſt heart,
In ſecret mine poſſeſt;
The morning bud that faireſt blows,
The vernal oak that ſtraiteſt grows,
His face and ſhape expreſt.

In

II.

In moving ſounds he told his tale;
Soft as the ſighings of the gale,
That wakes the flowery year:
What wonder he cou'd charm with eaſe!
Whom happy nature form'd to pleaſe,
Whom love had made ſincere.

III.

At morn he left me;---fought, and fell;
The fatal evening heard his knell,
And ſaw the tears I ſhed;
Tears that muſt ever, ever fall;
For ah! no ſighs the paſt recall,
No cries awake the dead!

CORIN.

Unhappy maid! yet not alone in woe;
For look, where our ſad gueſt, like ſome fair tree
Torn from the root by winter's cruel blaſt,
Lies on the ground o'erthrown.

EMMA.

I weep, to ſee it!

CORIN.

Thou haſt a heart ſweet pity loves to dwell in:
But, dry thy tears, and lean on this juſt hope——
If yet to do away his country's ſhame,
To ſerve her bravely on ſome bleſt occaſion;
If for theſe ends this ſtranger ſought our cottage,
The heavenly hoſts are hovering here unſeen,
To watch and to protect him.—But oh! when
(My heart burns for it) ſhall I ſee the hour
Of vengeance on theſe *Daniſh* infidels,
That war with heaven and us?

EMMA.

EMMA.

Alas, my love!
These passions are not for the poor man's state,
To heaven and to the rulers of the land
Leave such ambitious thoughts; be warned, my CORIN;
And think our little all depends on thee.

O Peace! the fairest child of heaven,
To whom the sylvan reign was given;
The vale, the fountain and the grove,
With every softer scene of love:

Return, sweet Peace! to chear the weeping swain,
Return, with Ease and Pleasure in thy train.

CORIN.

Hush! cease thy song—for see our mournful guest
Has raised his head, and lo! who comes to greet him;
His friend, the woodman of the neighbouring dale,
Whom late, as yester-evening star arose,
At his request I found, and hither brought:
Let us retire and leave them to confer.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

ALFRED, *Earl of* DEVON.

ALFRED.

How long, juſt heaven! how long
Shall war's fell ravage deſolate this land?
All, all is loſt—and ALFRED lives to tell it!
Are theſe things ſo? and he without the means
Of great revenge? caſt down below the hope
Of ſuccouring thoſe he weeps for?

DEVON.

Gracious ALFRED,
England's laſt hope, whoſe feeling goodneſs ſhews
What angels are; to bear, with ſuch a prince,
The worſt of ills, exile, or chains, or death,
Is happineſs, is glory.

ALFRED.

Ah! look round thee—
That mud-built cottage is thy ſovereign's palace.
Yon hind, whoſe daily toil is all his wealth,
Lodges and feeds him. Are theſe times for flattery?
Or call it praiſe: ſuch gaudy attributes
Would miſbecome our beſt and proudeſt fortunes.
But what are mine? What is this high-priz'd ALFRED?
Among ten thouſand wretches moſt undone!

That prince who ſees his country laid in ruins,
His ſubjects periſhing beneath the ſword
Of foreign war; who ſees and cannot ſave them,
Is but ſupreme in miſery!—But on,
Proceed, my lord; compleat the mournful tale,
My griefs broke off.

DEVON.

From yonder heath-clad hill,
Far as my ſtraining eye could ſhoot it's beam
I look'd, and ſaw the progreſs of the foe,
As of ſome tempeſt, ſome devouring tide,
That ruins, without mercy, where it ſpreads.
The riches of the year, the bread of thouſands
That liberal crown'd our plains from vale to hill,
With intermingled foreſts, temples, towers,
Now ſmoak to heaven, one broad-aſcending cloud.
But oh for pity! on each mountain's height,
Shivering and ſad the pale inhabitants,
Gray-headed age and youth, all ſtood and mark'd
This boundleſs ravage: motionleſs and mute,
With hands to heaven up-rais'd, they ſtood and wept—
My tears attended theirs—

ALFRED.

If this ſad ſight
Could pain thee to ſuch anguiſh, what muſt I
Their king and parent feel?

DEVON.

DEVON.

Sir, be of comfort.
Who has not known ill fortune, never knew
Himſelf, or his own virtue.

ALFRED.

Well—no more.—
Complaint is for the vulgar: kings muſt act;
Reſtore a ruin'd ſtate, or periſh with it.
Deſpair ſhall be our ſtrength.—

DEVON.

Behold, my lord,
From yonder hazle copſe, who iſſues forth,
And moves this way—a ſtranger—but his look
Speaks haſte and apprehenſion—

ALFRED.

Ha! beyond
My utmoſt hope!—'Tis EDWIN—

SCENE III.

ALFRED, DEVON, EDWIN.

ALFRED.

Haſt thou ought
Of joyful to impart? or is the ſoul
Of *England* dead indeed?

EDWIN.

My gracious maſter,
This journey has been fruitful to our wiſh.
Awak'd, as from the laſt and mortal trance,
That ſoul, which ſeem'd extinguiſh'd, lives again:
By me aſſur'd, their ſovereign ſtill ſurvives,
Survives to take due vengeance on thoſe robbers,
Who violate the ſanctity of leagues,
The reverend ſeal of oaths; who baſely broke,
Like midnight ruffians, on the hour of peace,
And ſtole a victory from men unarm'd;
Of this aſſur'd, your people breathe once more.
The ſpirit of our anceſtors is up!
The ſpirit of the free! and, with one voice
Of happy omen, all demand their king.

ALFRED.

Then, heaven who knows our wrongs will deign to guide
The virtue it inſpires—My lord, how ſound
Theſe tidings in your ears?

DEVON:

As the ſure omen
Of better fate, my heart receives and hails them.
For know, my liege, the fury of thoſe *Danes*,
This laſt dire ſcene of total deſolation,
Will kindle up the flame to ſeven-fold fierceneſs;
New-wing each ſhaft, edge every lifted ſword,
And drive—

ALFRED.

ALFRED.

A moment—EDWIN, yet inform me
What numbers have you gather'd? how diſpos'd,
Where poſted them?

EDWIN.

In theſe ſurrounding woods,
Soon as the ſhade of night deſcends to veil them,
A generous few, the veteran hardy gleanings
Of many a well-fought field, all at one hour,
Behind the ruſhy brook from hence due eaſt,
By different paths, and in ſmall parties meet,
Accoutred at all points: and, as I judge,
Their numbers count twelve hundred.

ALFRED.

Ha! twelve hundred—
Incredible—ſoft—let me duly weigh
What I, unhoping, ſcarce believing, hear.
Something muſt, now, be done—Ay, that attempt
Is great—but greatly hazardous—why then,
Neceſſity, our juſt plea, muſt excuſe
The deſperate daring her hard law impoſes.
Hear, my brave friends. One caſtle ſtill is ours,
Tho cloſe begirt and ſhaken by the *Danes*.
DEVON, ſpeed thither; find out that cloſe path,
By EDWIN's eye and aid, which from the midſt,
The central point of *Kinwith-foreſt* winds
In deep deſcent; and, under ground prolong'd,
Safe in the fortreſs ends.

DEVON.

Suppoſe me there:

What follows this, my lord?

ALFRED.

Be it your part

To animate our brothers of the war,
Thoſe *Engliſhmen*, who yet deſerve that name.
The foe—dwell much on this—by our known weakneſs
Made daring and ſecure, will now the rein
Of diſcipline relax, and to looſe revel
Indulge the midnight hour. Therefore, at three—
O count the clock with more than lovers' vigilance—
At three, that choſen band ſhall from behind,
Riſing at once, with ALFRED at their head,
Aſſail the hoſtile camp: while your warm ſally,
That very moment, pours upon it's front.
Hence: and ſucceſs be thine.

DEVON.

On this our purpoſe,

The ſacred cauſe of liberty and vengeance,
Smile, righteous heaven!

ALFRED.

O urge it home, my friend,

That each man's ſword now wears upon it's point
The preſent age, and laſt poſterity!
Farewell. EDWIN, within the hour return,
And find me here.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

ALFRED.

Ha! day declines apace:
What anxious thoughts, in this wild ſolitude,
My darker hours muſt know? And now, the veil
Of evening, o'er theſe murmuring woods around,
A lonely horror ſpreads—But ſoft: the breeze
Is dumb! and more than midnight ſilence reigns!
Why beats my boſom?—Muſic! Shield me, heaven!
Whence ſhould it come?—Hark!—now the meaſur'd ſtrains,
In awful ſweetneſs warbling, ſtrike my ſenſe,
As if ſome wing'd muſician of the ſky
Touch'd his ethereal harp.

SCENE

SCENE V.

Solemn muſic is heard at a diſtance. It comes nearer in a full ſymphony: after which a ſingle trumpet ſounds a high and awakening air. Then the following ſtanzas are ſung by two aëreal Spirits.

First SPIRIT.

Hear, ALFRED, *father of the ſtate,*
Thy genius heaven's high will declare!
What proves the hero truly great,
Is never, never to deſpair.

Both SPIRITS.

Is never to deſpair.

Second SPIRIT.

Thy hope awake, thy heart expand
With all its vigour, all its fires:
Ariſe, and ſave a ſinking land!
Thy country calls and heaven inſpires.

Both SPIRITS.

Earth calls and heaven inſpires.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

ALFRED.

Am I awake! and is it no illuſion
That heaven thus deigns to look with mercy on me?
Thus, by his miniſters, to chear my heart,
And warm it into hope? But lo! he comes,
Whom angels deign to viſit and inſpire,
The holy ſage, deſcending from his cell
In yon hill's cavern'd ſide: ſweet ſylvan ſcene
Where ſhade and ſilence dwell!

SCENE VII.

ALFRED, HERMIT.

ALFRED.

Thrice happy HERMIT!
Whom thus the heavenly habitants attend,
Bleſſing thy calm retreat; while ruthleſs war
Fills the polluted land with blood and crimes.

In

In this extremity of *England*'s fate,
Led by thy ſacred character, I come
For comfort and advice. Say what remains,
What yet remains to ſave our proſtrate country?
Nor ſcorn this anxious queſtion even from me,
A nameleſs ſtranger.

HERMIT:

ALFRED, *England*'s king,
All hail, and welcome to this humble cell.

ALFRED.

Amazement!—by theſe humble weeds obſcur'd,
I deem'd my ſtate beyond diſcovery's reach:
How is it then to thee alone reveal'd?

HERMIT.

Laſt night, when with a draught from that cool fountain
I had my wholeſome ſober ſupper crown'd;
As is my ſtated cuſtom, forth I walk'd
Beneath the ſolemn gloom and glittering ſky,
To feed my ſoul with prayer and meditation.
And thus to inward harmony compos'd,
That ſweeteſt muſic of the grateful heart,
Whoſe each emotion is a ſilent hymn,
I to my couch retir'd. Strait on mine eyes
A pleaſing ſlumber fell, whoſe myſtic power
Seal'd up my ſenſes, but enlarg'd my ſoul.
Led by thoſe ſpirits, who diſcloſe futurity,
I liv'd thro diſtant ages; felt the virtue,
The great, the glorious paſſions that will fire
Remote poſterity; when guardian laws
Are by the patriot, in the glowing ſenate,

Won from corruption; when th' impatient arm
Of liberty, invincible, ſhall ſcourge
The tyrants of mankind—and when the deep,
Thro all her ſwelling waves, from pole to pole
Shall ſpread the boundleſs empire of thy ſons.
I ſaw thee, ALFRED, too—But o'er thy fortunes
Lay clouds impenetrable.

ALFRED.

To heaven's will,
In either fortune, mine ſhall ever bend
With humbleſt reſignation—Yet, O ſay,
Does that unerring Providence, whoſe juſtice
Has bow'd me to the duſt; whoſe miniſters,
Sword, fire and famine, ſcourge this ſinful land,
This tomb of it's inhabitants—does he
Reſerve me in his hand, the glorious inſtrument
From fierce oppreſſion to redeem my country?

HERMIT.

What mortal eye, by his immediate beam
Not yet enlighten'd, dare preſume to look
Thro time's abyſs? But ſhould the flatterer, hope,
Anticipating ſee that happy time,
Thoſe whiter moments—Prince, remember, then,
The noble leſſons by affliction taught:
Preſerve the quick humanity it gives,
The pitying ſocial ſenſe of human weakneſs;
Yet keep thy generous fortitude entire,
The manly heart, that to another's woe
Is tender, as ſuperiour to it's own.

Learn to ſubmit: yet learn to conquer fortune,
Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life: to life itſelf,
With all it's vain and tranſient joys, ſit looſe;
Chief, let devotion to the ſovereign Mind,
A ſteady, chearful, abſolute dependance
On his beſt wiſeſt government, poſſeſs thee.

ALFRED.

I thank thee, father; and O witneſs, heaven,
Whoſe eye the heart's profoundeſt depth explores!
That if not to perform my regal taſk;
To be the common father of my people,
Patron of honor, virtue and religion;
If not to ſhelter uſeful worth, to guard
His well-earn'd portion from the ſons of rapine,
And deal out juſtice with impartial hand;
If not to ſpread, on all good men, thy bounty,
The treaſures truſted to me, not my own;
If not to raiſe anew our *Engliſh* name,
By peaceful arts that grace the land they bleſs,
And generous war to humble proud oppreſſors;
Yet more; if not to build the public weal,
On that firm baſe which can alone reſiſt
Both time and chance, on liberty and law;
If I for theſe great ends am not ordain'd—
May I ne'er poorly fill the throne of *England!*

HERMIT.

HERMIT.

Still may thy breaſt theſe ſentiments retain,
In proſperous life.

ALFRED.

Could it deſtroy or change
Such thoughts as theſe, proſperity were ruin.

Two SPIRITS *ſing the following hymn.*

FIRST.

O joy of joys, to lighten woe!
Beſt pleaſure, pleaſure to beſtow!
What raptures then his *heart expand,*
Who lives to bleſs a grateful land.

Second SPIRIT.

For him, ten thouſand boſoms beat;
His name conſenting crouds repeat:
From ſoul to ſoul the paſſion runs,
And ſubjects kindle into ſons.

HERMIT.

HERMIT.

ALFRED, once more—ſince favour'd thus of heaven,
Since thus to cheer thee and confirm thy virtue
He ſends his angels forth—remember well,
Should better days reſtore thy proſperous fortunes,
The vows theſe awful beings hear thee make:
Remember and fulfil them.

ALFRED.

O no more—
When thoſe whom heaven diſtinguiſhes o'er millions,
And ſhowers profuſely power and ſplendor on them,
Whate'er th' expanded heart can wiſh; when they,
Accepting the reward, neglect the duty,
Or worſe, pervert thoſe gifts to deeds of ruin,
Is there a wretch they rule ſo baſe as they?
Guilty, at once, of ſacrilege to heaven!
And of perfidious robbery to man!

HERMIT.

Such thoughts become a monarch—but behold,
The glimmering duſk, involving air and ſky,
Creeps ſlow and ſolemn on. Devotion now,
With eye enraptur'd, as the kindling ſtars
Light, one by one, all heaven into a glow
Of living fire, adores the Hand divine,
Who form'd their orbs and pour'd forth glory on them.

ALFRED.

ALFRED.

Then, this good moment, ſnatch'd from earth's affairs,
Let us employ aright: and, in yon cell,
To Him, with heart ſincere, our homage pay,
Who glorious ſpreads and gracious ſhuts the day.

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

EMMA, *and other Peaſants.*

WISH'D evening now is come: but her ſoft hour,
Cloſe of our daily toil, that wont to ſound
Sweet with the ſhepherd's pipe and virgin's voice,
Is chearleſs all and mute.

Second SHEPHERDESS.

Heaven's will be ours.
And ſince no grief can yeſterday recall,
Nor change tomorrow's face; now let us ſoothe
The preſent as we may with dance and ſong,
To lighten ſad remembrance.

Firſt

First SHEPHERDESS *sings.*

I.

The shepherd's plain life,
Without guilt, without strife,
Can only true blessings impart.
As nature directs,
That bliss he expects
From health and from quiet of heart.

II.

Vain grandeur and power,
Those toys of an hour,
Tho mortals are toiling to find;
Can titles or show
Contentment bestow?
All happiness dwells in the mind.

III.

Behold the gay rose,
How lovely it grows,
Secure in the depth of the vale.
Yon oak, that on high
Aspires to the sky,
Both lightning and tempest assail.

IV.

Then let us the ſnare
Of Ambition beware,
That ſource of vexation and ſmart:
And ſport on the glade,
Or repoſe in the ſhade,
With health and with quiet of heart.

Here a paſtoral dance.

SCENE II.

CORIN, EMMA, PEASANTS.

CORIN.

O happy hour! wife, neighbours—ſuch, ſuch news!
I ſhall run wild with joy!

EMMA.

Speak, ſhepherd; ſay,
What moves thee thus?

CORIN.

The king is in our iſle!

EMMA.

Can it be poſſible?

PEASANT.

What do I hear?

CORIN.

As now I paſs'd beneath the hermit's cell,
I heard that wonderous man pronounce his name.
O EMMA, the poor ſtranger whom we ſerv'd
And honour'd, all-unknowing of his ſtate,
Is he! our great and gracious ALFRED!

ALL.

ALL.

Heaven!
Then are we bleſt indeed!

CORIN.

My humble cottage,
Long ages hence, when we are duſt, my friends,
In holy pilgrimage oft viſited,
Will draw true *Engliſh* knees to worſhip there,
As at the ſhrine of ſome propitious ſaint,
Or angel friendly to mankind—The thought
Brings tears into mine eyes.—

EMMA.

Does joy deceive
My ſenſe? or did I hear a diſtant voice
Sigh thro the vale and wake the mournful echo?

The following ſong
is ſung by a perſon unſeen.

I.

Sweet valley! ſay, where penſive lying,
For me, our children, England, ſighing,
The beſt of mortals leans his head:
Ye fountains! dimpled by my ſorrow;
Ye brooks! that my complaining borrow,
O lead me to his lonely bed!
Or if my lover,
Deep woods ye cover,
Ah! whiſper where your ſhadows o'er him ſpread.

II.

* *'Tis not the loſs of pomp and pleaſure,*
Of empire, or of tinſel treaſure,
That drops the tear, that ſwells the groan;
No, from a nobler cauſe proceeding,
A heart with love and fondneſs bleeding,
I breathe my ſadly pleaſing moan;
With other anguiſh,
I ſcorn to languiſh.
For love will feel no ſorrow but his own.

* This ſtanza is omitted in the repreſentation.

CORIN.

What think ye, friends? Such moving, melting ſoftneſs
Breathes in theſe ſweet complainings, as till now
Mine ear was never bleſt with. Let us go
And find out this new wonder.

Second SHEPHERDESS.

Look, the king!

EMMA.

Now, by my holidame, a goodly perſon,
And of moſt noble mein.

CORIN.

Diſturb him not.

SCENE III.

ALFRED, HERMIT.

HERMIT.

Your enterpriſe is bold—and may be fatal:
Yet I condemn it not. All is not raſhneſs,
That valor of more common ſize might think,
And caution term ſo. Souls of nobler ſcope,
Whoſe comprehenſive ſight beholds at once
And weighs the ſum of things, are their own rule,
And to be judg'd but by themſelves alone.

ALFRED.

Then, in the name of that inſpiring Power,
Whoſe deputy I am, who ſends me forth
His miniſter of vengeance, on I go
To victory, or death.

[*As he is going out, he ſtops ſhort.*

What do I feel?
Save me! a holy horror ſtirs my frame,
And ſhivers thro each vein—What ſhapes are theſe,
Athwart the gloom, that ſtrike my dazled ſenſe?
Betwixt and where yon miſt along the marſh
Rowls blue it's vapoury wave, ſome unſeen hand
Pourtrays in air the viſionary ſcene
Diſtinct and full, in brighter colors drawn
Than ſummer ſuns reflect on evening cloud,
When all it's fluid boſom glows with gold—
And now, it reddens into blood!

HERMIT, *who had obſerved him fixedly, half-aſide.*

Ere night
Withdraws her ſhade, new accidents and ſtrange
Will ſhake this iſland's peace.

[*To him.*

Now, ALFRED, now,
Be all the hero ſhewn.

ALFRED.

What may this mean?

SCENE

SCENE IV.

ALFRED, CORIN.

CORIN, *kneeling.*

My honor'd ſovereign—

ALFRED.

How is this! ha! what!

Diſcover'd by this peaſant—Be it ſo:
The plain man is moſt loyal.

CORIN.

England's wealth,
The pearly ſtores her circling ſeas contain,
Should never ſhake your CORIN's faith—

ALFRED.

But what
Alarms thee thus?

CORIN.

My fears are for my king.
Some ſtrangers, Sir—their habits ſpeak them *Danes*—
Have found our iſle. Look this way.

ALFRED.

ALFRED.

Be of courage.
Now, I perceive them. Thro the evening ſhade
Their armor gleams a faint and moving light.
Weſtward they turn, and ſtrike into the path
That opens on this plain. Retire we, ſhepherd,
Behind yon duſky elm; from whence, unſeen,
We may diſcern their numbers and their purpoſe.

SCENE V.

DANES *paſſing along.*

Firſt DANE.

No more. 'Twas ſhe: I could not be deceiv'd.
A lover's eye is as the eagle's ſharp,
And kens his prey from far—But liſt a while,
If ſound of human voice, or bleat of flocks
May guide our loſt enquiry thro this wild.

Second DANE.

No: all is lonelineſs around, and huſh'd
As our dead northern waſtes at midnight hour.
Our gods protect us! Prince, it was moſt raſh,
So few our numbers, at this cloſe of day
Headlong to plunge amid theſe horrid ſhades,
Where danger lurks unſeen.

Firſt

First DANE.

How! know'ſt thou not
That *England* is no more? Her ſons of war,
To dens and caverns fled, like fearful hares
Sit trembling at each blaſt the chill wind blows.
Her king himſelf or ſleeps in duſt, or roams
Wild on the pathleſs mountain. As for me;
Our country gods, thoſe ſpirits that poſſeſs
The boundleſs wilderneſs, that love to dwell
With dreary ſolitude and night profound,
Will guard the ſon of IVAR, to whoſe houſe
Their vaſſalage is bound by magic ſpell.
Come on. She muſt be found, this unknown fair
Who fir'd me at firſt view; and rages ſtill
A fever in my youthful blood. Away.

SCENE VI.

ALFRED, CORIN, *advancing.*

CORIN.

They are but three.

ALFRED.

And were that number trebled,
This iſland is their grave; this ſacred ſpot,

Fair freedom's laſt retreat. We muſt, we will
Preſerve it, all-inviolate and holy,
From impious infidels: or, with our blood,
If now we periſh, ſanctify it's earth
For after-times to viſit and revere.

CORIN.

Liſt, liſt, my lord—

ALFRED.

What noiſe was that?—By heaven,
The ſhrieks of women! Now, ſtern vengeance guide
The ſword we draw.

SCENE VII.

EMMA, *and other peaſants.*

EMMA.

Ah, whither ſhall we fly?
Immortal virgin! queen of mercy! ſave us—
See, ſee, my friends, they ſeize the lovely ſtranger—
They bear her off—Behold the king appears—
My huſband too—Now, heaven, defend alike
The mighty and the mean, the prince and peaſant!
Two of them fall beneath our monarch's arm—
The third, my CORIN—O I dare no more
Look that way—Yet I muſt—The third is ſlain!
O gallant ſhepherd! O moſt happy hour!

SCENE VIII.

ALFRED, CORIN,
supporting the lady.

ALFRED.

This way, brave ſhepherd, from theſe cloſer ſhades—
Here the free air and breezy glade will rouſe
Her fainting ſpirits—So—Who may ſhe be?
Perhaps, ſome worthy heart at this ſad moment
Akes for her ſafety.

ELTRUDA.

Save me, ſave me, heaven!

ALFRED.

Ye powers! what do I hear?—Yes—yes—'tis ſhe!
My wife, my queen! the treaſure of my ſoul!

ELTRUDA.

My ALFRED!

ALFRED.

My ELTRUDA!

ELTRUDA.

Can it be?
Or is it all th' illuſion of my fear?
O no: 'tis he—my lord! my life! my huſband!
My guardian angel ALFRED.

ALFRED.

My ELTRUDA!
Black horror chills me while I view the brink,
The dreadful precipice, on which we ſtood—
And was it thee I reſcu'd from theſe ruffians—
O Providence amazing!—thee, ELTRUDA!

ELTRUDA.

I tremble ſtill!—from worſe than death deliver'd!
And am I then ſecure in ALFRED's arms?

ALFRED.

There let me hold thee; lull thy fears to reſt:
There huſh thy ſoul with everlaſting fondneſs.
The panting bird ſo flutters, juſt eſcap'd
The fowler's ſnare.

ELTRUDA.

My heart, my heart is full—
And muſt o'erflow in tears. A thouſand thoughts
Are buſy here—That ever we ſhould meet
In ſuch a dire extremity!—Ah me!
That ever ALFRED's family and children
Should need the ſhelter of his ſingle arm!

ALFRED.

My children!—where, where are they?

ELTRUDA.

Turn thine eyes
To yonder cottage: there conceal'd—

ALFRED.

My CORIN,
Fly, bring them to my arms. But ſay, my love,
Why didſt thou leave the convent, where I plac'd thee?
Why,

Why, unprotected, truſt thee to a land,
A barbarous land, where violence inhabits?
Our hoſpitable *England* is no more.

ELTRUDA.

Alas! my ALFRED, even the peaceful cells,
Where ſafe beneath religion's holy veil
Her cloiſter'd votaries dwelt, from impious *Danes*
No reverence claim. The villages around,
Diſpers'd and flying wild before their arms,
Inform'd us, a near party, on whoſe courſe
Deſtruction waits, were marching full to us.
Inſtant I fled. Two faithful ſervants bore
Our children off: and heaven has ſav'd us all!

ALFRED.

O welcome to my ſoul!—O happy ALFRED!
Thus to have reſcu'd what the feeling heart
Moſt dear and precious holds, from men who war
With earth and heaven.

ELTRUDA.

Tho terrible at firſt,
Bleſt be the tempeſt that has driven me hither,
Into this ſafe, this ſacred harbor!

ALFRED.

Come,
O come, and here repoſe thee from the ſtorm,
Within theſe ſheltering arms.

ELTRUDA, *holding him off.*

Yet—let me view thee—
My king and huſband—do I find thee thus?
[*falling into his arms.*
Unknown!

Unknown! unſerv'd! unhonor'd! none to tend thee!
To ſoothe thy woes, to watch thy broken ſlumbers,
With every fonder ſervice, pious love
Beſt knows to pay!—There is in love a power,
There is a ſoft divinity that draws,
Even from diſtreſs, thoſe tranſports that delight
The breaſt they pain, and it's beſt powers exalt
Above all taſte of joys from vulgar life!

ALFRED.

O 'tis too much—thou all that makes life glorious!
Nay look not on me with this ſweet dejection;
Thro tears that pierce the ſoul—
My children too!
My little ones! Come to your ſire's embrace:
'Tis all he can beſtow—In them behold
What human grandeur is—The peaſant's offspring
Have ſome retreat, ſome ſafe, tho lowly home:
But you, my babes, you have no habitation!
With pain and peril wandering thro a land,
A ruin'd country you were born to rule!
The thought unmans my reaſon.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT.

HERMIT.

I have heard
Thy fond complainings, ALFRED.

ALFRED.

You have then,
Good father, heard the cauſe that wrings them from me.

HERMIT.

The human race are ſons of ſorrow born:
And each muſt have his portion. Vulgar minds
Refuſe, or crouch beneath their load: the brave
Bear theirs without repining.

ALFRED.

Who can bear
The ſhaft that wounds him thro an infant's ſide?
When whom we love, to whom we owe protection,
Implore the hand we cannot reach to ſave them.

HERMIT.

Weep not, ELTRUDA.—Yet, thou art a king;
All private paſſions fall before that name.
Thy ſubjects claim thee whole.

ALFRED.

Can public truſt,
O reverend ſage! deſtroy the ſofter ties
That twine around the parent's yearning heart?
This holy paſſion heaven itſelf infus'd,
And blended with the ſtream that feeds our life.
All nature feels it intimate and deep,
And all her ſons of inſtinct and of reaſon.

HERMIT.

Then ſhew that paſſion in it's nobleſt form.
Think what a taſk it is, to rear thoſe minds,
On whom the fate of millions, general bliſs,
Or univerſal miſery, depends.

ALFRED.

That taſk then, difficult alike and noble,
Be thine, O ſacred ſage; to whoſe try'd wiſdom
I, henceforth, ſolely truſt their tender years.
Let truth and virtue be their earlieſt teachers.
Keep from their ear the ſyren-voice of flattery;
Keep from their eye the harlot-form of vice,
Who ſpread, in every court, their ſilken ſnares,
And charm but to betray. Betimes inſtruct them,
Superior rank demands ſuperior worth;
Pre-eminence of valor, juſtice, mercy:
But chief, that tho exalted o'er mankind,
They are themſelves but men—frail ſuffering duſt;
From no one injury of human lot
Exempt: but fever'd by the ſame heat, chill'd
By the ſame cold, torn by the ſame diſeaſe,
That ſcorches, freezes, racks, and kills the beggar.

Should

Should fairer days, returning, ſmile again
On *England* and on me—
Ha! EDWIN here?
This way, my friend—ſpeak ſoftly—
EDWIN *whiſpers the king aſide.*
How!—'tis well!—
Back to thy poſt: I follow on the inſtant—
Yet ſtay—Behold my queen, and infant-ſons!
EDWIN—thy king's whole wealth is there ſumm'd up!
Nay, wipe thine eyes; and tell my gallant friends
What thou haſt ſeen. The tale will lend new force
To each man's arm, and with redoubled weight
Urge every well-aim'd blow. Hence! ſpeed thee well.
ELTRUDA—we muſt part—

ELTRUDA.

What do I hear?
My life, my love—

ALFRED.

Part for a few ſad moments,
That our next meeting may be long and happy.

ELTRUDA.

What leave me now? O my preſaging heart!
Already leave me! 'Tis the dreadful call
Of glory, ſomewhat perilouſly great,
And big with urgent haſte, that tears thee from me.
Oh ALFRED—

ALFRED.

No fond weakneſs now be ſhewn,
ELTRUDA, no diſtruſt of virtue's fate.
Thou and thy children are, at preſent, ſafe

In this wiſe Hermit's care. For what remains;
My cauſe is juſt, my fortune in His hand
Who reigns ſupreme, almighty and all-good.
* That Power who ſtills the raging of the main,
The rage of all our foes can render vain.
To his unerring will reſign'd ſincere,
I fear that God, and know no other fear!

End of the Second Act.

* Tranſlated from RACINE's ATHALIE.

Celui, qui met un frein à la fureur des flots,
Sçait auſſi des méchans arreſter les complots.
Soûmis avec reſpect à ſa volonté ſainte,
Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, & n'ay point d'autre crainte.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

EMMA, *and other ſhepherdeſſes.*

EMMA.

YES, EDITH, we will watch, till morning ſhines,
Around this cottage, now made rich and glorious—
Who durſt have thought ſuch wonders?—by a queen,
And her bright offſpring! Thou, mean while, invoke,
With ſounds of ſoothing ſtrain, the gentle ſleep
To pour his timely vapours on their eye-lids.

EDITH *ſings.*

I.

In cooling ſtream, O ſweet repoſe,
Thoſe balmy dews diſtill,
That ſteal the mourner from his woes,
And bid deſpair be ſtill.

II.

Prolong the ſmiling infant's reſt,
Who yet no ſorrow knows:
But O the mother's bleeding breaſt
To ſofteſt peace compoſe!

III.

For her the faireſt dreams adorn,
That wave on fancy's wing;
The purple of aſcending morn,
The bloom of opening ſpring.

IV.

Let all, that ſoothes the ſoul or charms,
Her midnight hour employ;
Till bleſt again in ALFRED's *arms,*
She wakes to real joy.

EMMA.

EMMA.

Alas! ſhe comes. Let us withdraw, my friends.
Her ſorrows claim all reverence: and 'tis meet
We leave her to herſelf.

SCENE II.

ELTRUDA.

Amid the depth of this ſurrounding gloom,
While nature all is huſh'd, ELTRUDA wakes
To think—and to be wretched. Oh my love!
My heart's ſole reſt and refuge! Where is he!
Victor or vanquiſh'd—what is now his fate?
Moments of terror—Ha! what noiſe was that?
Each ſound appals me, and each thought is death!
'Twas more than fancy ſure: it ſeem'd the groan
Of bleeding men---O every guardian wing
Of ſaints and angels ſhield him! from his breaſt
Turn wide the flying ſhaft, the lifted ſteel,
And, ſheltering him, a ruin'd nation ſave.
Who comes? Speak, quickly ſpeak.

SCENE

SCENE III.

ELTRUDA, *an* ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

My gracious miſtreſs,
Why to the breath of this untimely ſky
Expoſe your health?

ELTRUDA.

Away---the health, the life
Of *England* is at ſtake: my ALFRED fights---
Perhaps he bleeds: and I am loſt for ever!
But is there none, no meſſenger return'd
From that dark ſcene of death?

ATTENDANT.

No, madam, none.

Enter EMMA.

ELTRUDA.

My kind hoſteſs, thou haſt an angel's voice,
Come raiſe my drooping ſpirits, charm my mind
With muſic's animating voice, and give
Some reſpite to my woes.

EMMA *ſings.*

Reſtore, good heav'n, our virtuous king!
To chaſe this gloom that round us low'rs,
As winter flies before the ſpring,
Who ſpreads the ſmiling earth with flow'rs.

He comes! before his riſing ray,
Deſpair and darkneſs fly away.

ELTRUDA.

ELTRUDA.

Thy ſong, ſweet flatterer of hope, ſuſpended
My affliction for a moment---but it returns.

Trumpets ſound.

Ha! hear'ſt thou not---the trumpets diſtant voice---
It ſpeaks aloud and ſhakes the echoing woods.
See, ſee, my EMMA, what tidings it proclaims.

[*Exit* EMMA.

ELTRUDA.

O my torn, tortur'd heart! What is the hour?

ATTENDANT.

By yon faint light, that glimmering ſteals along
From eaſt to north, I gueſs the morning near.

ELTRUDA.

Then all my hopes and fears ſuſpended hang
On this dread moment's wing.

SCENE IV.

ELTRUDA, ATTENDANT, EMMA.

EMMA.

O mighty queen,
They come, the murderers come. Protect us, heaven,

[*kneeling.*

Our huſbands, and our infants, from their rage.
Without thine aid we periſh.

ELTRUDA.

O my ſoul!
Why what a ſight is this? A tyrant's eye

Might

Might melt with pity o'er it. Thou ſupreme,
[*kneeling.*
All-ruling arbiter of human fate!
Whoſe univerſal family is nature,
On ALFRED, on his children, on his people,
Look down with mercy—for their cauſe is thine,
And now, even now, deciding!

HERMIT, ELTRUDA, *and others.*

HERMIT.

Glorious princeſs!
This is indeed to reign. Comfort, great queen:
It comes, it comes! the promis'd ſcene diſcloſes!
I ſee the *Daniſh* raven droop his wing;
See *England*'s genius ſoar again to heaven,
And better days in white ſucceſſion roll,
Without a cloud between!

The clouds break away; and on the edge of a rock, in full view, a ſpirit is ſeen amidſt a blaze of light, who ſings the following

ODE.

ODE.

From thoſe eternal regions bright,
Where ſuns that never ſet in night,
Diffuſe the golden day;
Where ſpring, unfading, pours around,
O'er all the dew-impearled ground,
Her thouſand colors gay;
The meſſenger of heaven's high King,
I come; and happy tidings bring,
To chear this drooping iſle:
Behold her cruel foes are fled!
Behold fair freedom lifts the head,
And all his children ſmile!
The dawn, that now unveils her ſkies,
See England's *future glory riſe:*
A better age is born!
Then, let each voice of ſprightly ſtrain,
Around from warbling hill and plain,
Hail this triumphant morn!

Grand CHORUS.

Then let each voice of ſprightly ſtrain,
Around from warbling hill and plain,
Hail this triumphant morn!

SCENE VI.

ELTRUDA, HERMIT, *Earl of* DEVON.

DEVON, *kneeling.*

Succeſs is ours—

ELTRUDA.

The king, my lord—

DEVON.

Returns,

Victorious and unhurt.

ELTRUDA.

Then, firſt, to heaven,
For this beſt news I humbly bend the knee
In grateful adoration.—Now proceed,
My lord; and leave no circumſtance untold
Of this amazing night.

DEVON.

Her miſty ſhade
Had now enclos'd us round; when, led ſecure
By EDWIN's eye, the darkeſt depth I reach'd
Of *Kinwith-wood.* We parted.—He, in haſte,
Back to his charge. I thro the cavern'd path,
Whoſe inlet there is found, deſcending dark,
Long, under ground, it's ſolitary maze

Purſu'd

Purſu'd as beſt I could; and roſe at length
Safe in the fort our foes had cloſe begirt.
'Twas joy, 'twas rapture there, among the few
Who wiſh'd, not hop'd, my unforeſeen return.

ELTRUDA.

What follow'd this, my lord?

DEVON.

Prepare, I cry'd,
To live or die like men. Our king ſurvives;
And, now in arms, expects your inſtant aid.
To him then let us cut our glorious way
Thro yonder camp: or, if we nobly fall,
There offer to the genius of our country
Whole hecatombs of *Danes*.—As if one ſoul
Had mov'd them all, around their heads they whirl'd
Their ſounding faulchions—"Lead us to thoſe *Danes*:
Revenge and *England*"—was the general cry.

ELTRUDA.

I feel it here: my heart applauds their virtue.
How was this follow'd on?

DEVON.

To ſouls reſolv'd
Small preparation needs—The clock ſtruck three—
At once our gates flew wide: at once we ruſh'd
Prone on the *Daniſh* trenches—While behind,
Juſt to the fatal inſtant, ALFRED roſe
In all his terrors; o'er the mounded camp
Tempeſtuous drove; from ſpace to ſpace along
Spred ſlaughter and diſmay. Nor reſt, nor pauſe:
Back'd by his ardent band, right on he bore
Even to the tent, where ſunk in ſleep profound

The *Daniſh* monarch lay. His guards, a few
Whom honor prompted to defend their prince,
Fell round him. He yet lives: but, O dire chance
Of cruel war!—a priſoner and in chains.

ELTRUDA.

A fall how terrible! My breaſt is thrill'd,
And in the fierce barbarian mourns the captive.

HERMIT.

Such fortune ever wait on wild ambition!
On war unjuſt that deſolates whole nations,
And leaves a world in tears for one man's guilt!
But yet—fallen as he is—he knows not yet
What new diſtreſs, what keener pangs attend
To wound his inmoſt heart—That trumpet ſpeaks
The king's approach—Ye miniſters unſeen!

Spirits, whom the King of kings
Gives to watch o'er human things,
Hither, from each bleſt abode:
From the morning's purple road;
From the ſolar world of light;
From the planet of the night;
From the rainbow's evening-round;
From the blue horizon's bound;
Hither, borne thro ſeas of air,
Sons of life and love repair!
And now, with all that charms the eye,
This monarch's triumph dignify.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

To a grand flouriſh of inſtruments the ſcene, gradually opening, diſcovers ſeveral triumphal arches, adorned with trophies and garlands, and from ſpace to ſpace beautifully illuminated. The proceſſion is led by ſhepherdeſſes, ſtrewing flowers.

Firſt SHEPHERDESS.

Ariſe, ſweet meſſenger of morn,
With thy mild beam our skies adorn:
For long as ſhepherds pipe and play,
This, this ſhall be a holy-day.

Second SHEPHERDESS.

See, morn appears; a roſy hue
Steals ſoft o'er yonder orient blue:
Soon let us meet in trim array,
And frolic out this holy-day!

Theſe

These are followed by soldiers with palm branches in their hands. An officer behind bears the Danish *standard. Flourish of instruments.*

First VOICE.

Swell the trumpet's boldest note!

Second VOICE.

Let the drum it's thunders roll!

BOTH.

And, as on aery wings they float,
Spread ALFRED's *name from pole to pole!*

CHORUS.

Our sons unborn,
Still on this morn
With annual joy shall tell;
How by his might,
In daring fight,
The foes of England *fell.*

AIR.

AIR.

Prince, of every fame poſſeſt!
Prince and patriot both confeſt!
Thy grateful Albion *ſhall to lateſt days*
Roll down thy glories in a tide of praiſe!

CHORUS.

Thy grateful Albion *ſhall to lateſt days*
Roll down thy glories in a tide of praiſe!

ELTRUDA.

ELTRUDA.

Yon pictur'd raven—tell me is it not
Their wonderous magic ſtandard!

DEVON.

'Tis the ſame:
Wrought by the ſiſters of the *Daniſh* king,
At midnight's blackeſt hour; when the ſick moon,
Wrapt in eclipſe by their enchanting ſong,
Down thro the turbid clouds her influence ſhed
Of baleful power. The ſiſters ever ſung—
"Shake, ſtandard, ſhake deſtruction on our foes."

SCENE VIII.

ELTRUDA, HERMIT, *and the others.*

ALFRED *paſſing under the triumphal arches: The ſun, at the ſame time, riſing above the horizon.*

ELTRUDA:

He comes! the conqueror comes—

ALFRED.

In theſe lov'd arms
To loſe all ſorrow, and all bliſs to find!

ELTRUDA.

ELTRUDA.

O from what fears deliver'd for thy life,
And in that life for a whole people's being,
I thus receive thee back! thus fold thee ſafe!
Love only, love like mine, can feel, not utter!

ALFRED.

To Him aſcend all praiſe! whoſe will inſpir'd,
Whoſe arm ſuſtain'd this action, that reſtores
My better name—and, O more glorious ſtill,
Of nobler, dearer conſequence!—reſtores
Loſt *England* to her vigor, fame and freedom.

HERMIT.

For her, O ALFRED, your more arduous task
But now begins: this conqueſt to ſecure;
To ſpread it's influence wide, and, well improv'd
By unremitting vigilance and valor,
Make this one blow deciſive of her fate.
But now behold, to animate thy hope,
In myſtic ſhew expreſs'd what late thy fortune
Seem'd to portend; and what the brightening ſcene
With fairer promiſe opens.

Four Furies ariſe, to the ſound of inſtruments in diſcord, at four different openings from under ground, with torches in their left hands, and bloody ſwords in their right. They form a confuſed Pyrrhic *dance, ſhaking and pointing their ſwords and torches round the king in their centre: till, upon a change of the muſic into regular harmony, deſcends the Genius of* England, *with a crowned ſword in one hand, and a lawrel wreathe in the other. On ſight of whom the four Furies ſink thro the openings they aroſe from. He preſents the crowned ſword and lawrel-branch at the feet of the king, and reaſcends, while the following ſong is ſung.*

At laſt, at laſt,
Our night is paſt,
The gloomy night of fear:
And o'er our ſkies
Fair beams ariſe
Of peace and joy ſincere.
Then let triumph abound!
Let ecſtacy reign!
Till theſe hills all around,—around
Improving each ſtrain,
Our tranſports reſound;—reſound
The heart-felt tranſport that ſucceeds to pain!

ALFRED.

ALFRED.

I hail th' auſpicious omen—but ah me!
ELTRUDA, ſee, where comes th' unhappy king!

ELTRUDA.

Oh ſight of woe!

ALFRED.

Retire, my gentle love:
An interview like this were too ſevere
For thy ſoft nature.

ELTRUDA.

O my king, my ALFRED!
Now I ſee and hold thee thus, tho' my bliſs
Spring from *his* miſery, my heart muſt bleed,
For *him*, the king, the father, and the huſband!
Whoſe queen perhaps now feels thoſe pangs I felt,
When my diſtracted mind pictur'd my ALFRED
Loſt to his people, children, and myſelf.

[*Exit* ELTRUDA.

SCENE IX.

ALFRED, HERMIT, DANISH KING.

ALFRED, *after a pauſe.*

See, at laſt, O king,
In thy ſad fate, which even a foe laments,
See and acknowlege heaven's impartial hand.
For violated oaths and plunder'd realms,
For the heap'd guilt of baſe perfidious war,
This retribution is moſt juſt.

DANE.

Away—
I own no guilt: or kings of every age
Are criminal, thy anceſtors and mine!
What is all war, but more diffuſive robbery
Made ſacred by ſucceſs? What object ſwells
A monarch's higheſt aim?—increaſe of power
And univerſal ſway. This glorious end
All means muſt ſanctify, that can ſecure.
For what remains—Of bondage, or of death,
The leſſer ill, I reck not. But, by THOR,
The gloomy thunderer! one diſtracting thought
Bends my ſoul's ſtrongeſt temper; ſinks me down
Beneath my own contempt.

ALFRED.

Such fears diſmiſs
As muſt diſhonor both. The truly brave
His foe in equal arms will dare to meet:
Vanquiſh'd, he dares not injure, not inſult him.

DANE.

Nor that, nor ought without myſelf could thus
Unman me. No: my hell is here, within—
How! like a wretch, a nameleſs ſlave who fights
But for vile hire—in my own tent ſurpris'd!
Aſleep! unarm'd!—theſe ſhameful chains thrown o'er me,
And not one blow exchang'd! O baſer far
Than that low herd, who fled without a wound
Before thy ſword.—They but deſerted him,
Who firſt himſelf abandon'd—But thy gods
Were vigilant for thee: while mine all ſlept.

ALFRED.

ALFRED.

Your gods are idols: that ſole Power I ſerve,
Supreme and one, is univerſal Lord
O'er earth and heaven. Be it my daily taſk,
As 'tis my nobleſt theme, to own, by Him
Alone I conquer'd: as for him alone
I wiſh to reign—by making mankind bleſt!

DANE.

No more—Convey me to your baſeſt dungeon.
Let me explore it's darkeſt depth; ſhut out
The light of heaven; forget there is a ſun
Who ſhines on my diſhonor. Would I might
Exclude too my own thoughts—But yet, my ſon
Lives—and is free! lives to revenge my fall!
To waſh my ſtains in blood—Ha! where was he
This fatal night, when every god forſook me!
Where, where was IVAR then?

HERMIT.

Unhappy prince!
That ſon, alas!—

DANE.

Ha! what! why, who art thou?
What of my ſon?

HERMIT.

Thy truſt in him is vain,
To his own raſhneſs and intemperate luſt,
This very night, a victim, here, he fell—
Lo! where he lies.

DANE.

DANE.

My ſon—my ſon—Ha! dead—
My only child!—But no: I will not weep.
Is he not ſafe, beyond misfortune's hand?
Beyond all feeling of his father's ſhame?
Falſe hope, farewell!—Let madneſs, let deſpair
Surround me, ſeize me whole; till life's loath'd flame,
For ever quench'd in death, reſigns me o'er
To darkneſs and oblivion.

ALFRED.

Dire reverſe!
Dreadful impatience!—But theſe roving *Danes*
A ſtricter watch demand. Means more effectual
Muſt now be try'd, from our inſulted ſhores
To keep aloof this ſtill-deſcending war.
'Tis naval ſtrength, that muſt our peace aſſure.
Be this the firſt high object of my care,
To wall us round with well-appointed fleets.
In them our ſole dominion of the ſea,
Our wealth and grandeur, can alone be found,
The one great bulwark of our ſeparate world.

HERMIT.

ALFRED, go on; the noble taſk purſue,
Thy ſafety urges, and thy fame demands.
Yes, in her fleets, let *England* ever ſeek
Her ſure defence: by them, thro every age,
At home ſecure, renown'd and fear'd abroad,
Great arbitreſs of nations—Ha! the ſcene,
The radiant proſpect opens full before me!
Thro diſtant depths of time tranſported down,

I ſee whole moving foreſts, from her hills
Uprooted, bound triumphant o'er the main!
White tracks of glory brighten *Albion*'s ſkies,
As navies grow, as commerce ſwells her ſail
With every breeze that under heaven can blow,
From either pole; thro worlds yet unexplor'd,
In eaſt and weſt, that to thy ſons diſcloſe
Their golden ſtores, their wealth of various name,
And laviſh pour it on BRITANNIA's lap!

ALFRED.

Thy words new ſun-ſhine thro my breaſt diffuſe,
And ſmiling calm. But let us, HERMIT, try,
By juſtice, mercy, arms and arts improv'd,
By freedom fenc'd around with ſacred laws,
Our promis'd bliſs to merit and adorn.
Now, to my glorious taſk—

HERMIT.

Yet ere you go,
One moment, ALFRED, backward caſt your eyes
On this unfolding ſcene; where, pictur'd true,
As in a mirror, riſes fair to ſight
Our *England*'s genuine ſtrength and future fame.

Here is ſeen the ocean in proſpect, and ſhips ſailing along. Two boats land their crews. One ſailor ſings the following Ode: afterwhich, the reſt join lively dance.

I. *When*

I.

When BRITAIN *firſt at heaven's command,*
Aroſe from out the azure main;
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels ſung this ſtrain:
Rule, BRITANNIA, *rule the waves!*
BRITONS *never will be ſlaves.*

II.

The nations, not ſo bleſt as thee,
Muſt in their turns to tyrants fall:
While thou ſhalt flouriſh great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.
Rule, BRITANNIA, *rule the waves!*
BRITONS *never will be ſlaves.*

III.

Should war, ſhould faction ſhake thy iſle,
And ſink to poverty and ſhame;
Heaven ſtill ſhall on BRITANNIA *ſmile,*
Reſtore her wealth, and raiſe her name.
Rule, BRITANNIA, *rule the waves!*
BRITONS *never will be ſlaves.*

IV.

As the loud blaſt, that tears thy ſkies,
Serves but to root thy native oak;
Still more majeſtic ſhalt thou riſe,
From foreign, from domeſtic ſtroke.
Rule, BRITANNIA, *rule the waves:*
BRITONS *never will be ſlaves.*

V.

How bleſt the prince, reſerv'd by fate,
In adverſe days to mount thy throne!
Renew thy once triumphant ſtate,
And on thy grandeur build his own!
Rule, BRITANNIA, *rule the waves:*
BRITONS *never will be ſlaves.*

VI.

His race ſhall long, in times to come,
So heaven ordains, thy ſceptre wield,
Rever'd abroad, belov'd at home,
And be, at once, thy ſword and ſhield.
Rule, BRITANNIA, *rule the waves:*
BRITONS *never will be ſlaves.*

The End of the Maſque.

The following SONG *was altered by the author, and is now printed as it is ſung.*

I.

When Britain firſt, at heav'n's command,
Aroſe from out the azure main,
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels ſung this ſtrain.

CHORUS.

Rule, Britannia, rule the waves:
Britons never will be ſlaves!

II.

The nations, (not ſo bleſt as thee,)
Muſt in their turns to tyrants fall;
While thou ſhalt flouriſh great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.

CHORUS.

Rule, Britannia, &c.

III.

* Still more majeſtic ſhalt thou riſe,
More dreadful from each foreign ſtroke;
As the loud blaſt that tears the ſkies,
Serves but to root thy native oak.

CHORUS.

Rule, Britannia, &c.

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* *This verſe is omitted in the repreſentation.*

IV.

Thee, haughty tyrants ne'er ſhall tame,
All their attempts to bend thee down,
Will but arouze thy gen'rous flame,
But work their woe and thy renown.

CHORUS.

Rule, Britannia, &c.

V.

To thee belongs the rural reign,
Thy cities ſhall with commerce ſhine,
All thine ſhall be the ſubject main,
And ev'ry ſhore it circles thine.

CHORUS.

Rule, Britannia, &c.

VI.

The Muſes ſtill, with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coaſts repair;
Bleſt iſle! with matchleſs beauty crown'd,
And manly hearts to guard the fair!

CHORUS.

Rule, Britannia, rule the waves:
Britons never will be ſlaves!

FINIS.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. CLIVE.

WHile our grave Hermit, buſy above ſtairs,
Employs his ſerious head on ſtate affairs,
Gallants, look here—faith I have plaid the rogue,
And ſtole his wand—by way of epilogue.
You critics, there below, had beſt be civil:
For I, with this ſame rod, can play the devil;
Ty all your buſy tongues up, one by one,
And turn what ſhare of brains you have—to ſtone:
The beau's ſoft ſcull convert to ſolid rock—
What then?—the wig will always have it's block.
But for the men of ſad and ſolemn face,
The deep dark ſages in or out of place,
Who much in port and politics delight,
Small change, God knows, will make them ſtatues quite.
The ladies too—but now theſe witlings ſneer—
No, fair ones, you ſhall meet no inſult here:
I only hint my power—that, if I liſt,
I yet can charm you two long hours from whiſt.
But, cards are ready, you are all beſpoke—
To ſpoil a dozen drums, would be no joke.
Beſides, 'twould be mere arbitrary ſway:
Such as, of old, was us'd at Nero's *play,*

Who, when he ſung and fiddled to the town,
Still, as his ſubjects yawn'd, would knock them down.
No, ſirs; to gain a heart, we muſt not teize:
Who would engage it, firſt ſhould aim to pleaſe.
This part be mine: and, if I now ſucceed
To my own wiſh, you will be pleas'd indeed.
Then—for a trial: thus, I wave my hand,
To prove the power of this inchanting wand.

On waving her wand,

The ſcene opens, and diſcovers a beautiful valley, bordered on each hand by foreſt trees, riſing irregularly, and forming from ſpace to ſpace various groves. The proſpect behind is a landſchape of woodlands, and of mountains that aſcend above one another, till the laſt ſeem to loſe themſelves in the ſky. From the ſummit of the neareſt hill a river pours down, by ſeveral falls, in a natural caſcade. The warbling of birds is heard.

First Entry.

A husbandman, his wife, and family.

She.

How ſoft is the ſcene!
The woodlands how green!
What charms in the nightingale's lay!

He.

Fair peace, that now reigns
On our hills and our plains,
'Tis peace bids all nature be gay.

Chorus.

'Tis peace bids all nature be gay.

She.

The diſtaff,

He.

The plow,

Both.

Shall employ our hands now,
For ourſelves and our children alone.

He.

Secure from the foe,
We ſhall reap what we ſow:
And the year, the whole year is our own!

Chorus.

And the year, the whole year is our own.

She waves her wand. SECOND ENTRY.

A ſhepherd, and ſhepherdeſs.

They run into each others arms.

SHE.

If to meet is all this pleaſure,
Sure, to part was killing pain!

BOTH.

Yes, to part was killing pain!

HE.

If 'twas grief to loſe our treaſure,
How tranſporting to regain!

BOTH.

O 'tis tranſport to regain!

HE.

Thus poſſeſſing—

SHE.

every bleſſing
Crowns the maid—

HE.

And crowns her ſwain.

BOTH.

Crowns the happy maid and ſwain!

She waves her wand. THIRD ENTRY.

Soldiers descend the mountain by two different paths: at the bottom they lay down the spoils with which they are loaded; and then, advancing, two of them sing the following ballad.

FIRST MAN.

We have fought; we have conquer'd: and England *once more*
Shall flourish in fame, as she flourish'd before.
Our fears are all fled, with our enemies slain:
* *Could they rise up anew—*

SECOND.

We would slay them again.

His monarch to serve, or to do himself right,
No Englishman *yet ever flinch'd from the fight.*
For why, neighbours all, we are free as the king:
* *'Tis this makes us brave—*

FIRST.

And 'tis this makes us sing.

Our prince too, for this, will be thankful to fate—
It is, in our freedom, he finds himself great!
No force can be wanting, nor meaner court-arts:
* *He is master of all—*

SECOND.

Who will reign in our hearts!

Should rebels within, or should foes from without,
Bring the crown on his head, or his honor, in doubt;

* The verses marked with an asterisk to be sung a second time by both.

We are ready—

FIRST.

Still ready—and boldly foretell,
That conqueſt ſhall ever with liberty dwell!

SECOND.

But now, bring us forth, as the crown of our labor,
Much wine and good chear—

FIRST.

With the pipe and the tabor.
Let our nymphs all be kind, and our ſhepherds be gay;
For England, *Old* England, *is happy to day.*

CHORUS.

Let our nymphs all be kind, and our ſhepherds be gay;
For England, *Old* England, *is happy to day!*

They all mix in a dance
to the pipe and tabor.

The End.